

Haforsa CSOs ba Diversidade: Strengthening Civil Society Leadership for Improved Governance and Sustainable Development in Timor-Leste

KEY INFORMATION

SECTOR	Democratic participation and civil society
LEAD PARTNER	Plan International Sweden, Plan International Timor-Leste, Fórum ONG Timor-Leste (FONGTIL), Fundasaun CAUCUS
DURATION	36 months (November 2025 – October 2028)
PROJECT LOCATION	Timor-Leste (Dili-Atauru, Ainaro, Ermera, Viqueque)
TOTAL BUDGET EU	EUR 755,239
TOTAL BUDGET	EUR 869,314
DATE	25 November 2025

Background

Timor-Leste continues to face governance and development challenges rooted in poverty, social exclusion, and limited access to essential services, particularly affecting women, youth, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a key role in advocacy yet often lack sufficient capacity and resources. Organised and unorganised youths lack leadership and digital literacy skills and are constrained by societal norms with limited opportunities for policy dialogue engagement. Government institutions often have established structures but face challenges in efficient governance practices and collaboration with CSOs.

This project, implemented by Plan International with CAUCUS and FONGTIL is designed to address the needs of targeted civil society actors and community members to make communities become more inclusive, fair, and responsive to the needs of all people.

The initiative fully aligns with EU priorities by empowering women and youth, enhancing local leadership, and promoting good governance, human rights, and sustainable development in Timor-Leste. By tackling land tenure insecurity, a critical development constraint, it aims to reduce conflict, protect vulnerable groups, and foster equitable access to land as a foundation for resilience and growth.



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Project Details

The main goal of the project is to strengthen local CSOs' organizational and operational capacities to make them more legitimate, democratic, and inclusive so they can support and empower groups who are often left out of decision-making, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ individuals. When these organizations are strong, they can guide communities, influence leaders, and make sure everyone's voice is heard in advocacy and community initiatives.

To achieve this, the project carries out several key activities. First, it helps LCSOs improve how they work—strengthening their leadership, planning, communication, and safeguarding systems. Second, it trains staff and community leaders on gender equality, advocacy, digital literacy, and civic participation so they can confidently lead awareness-raising activities and community dialogues. Third, it supports marginalized groups to develop skills in media, policy analysis, and data collection, enabling them to monitor government commitments and advocate for changes that matter to their lives and be part of community-led development. Organised youth, civil-society networks and media important target groups.

Through the activities, the project directly supports around 6,455 people, including 3,250 women, 2,625 youth, 350 persons with disabilities, and 230 LGBTQI+ individuals. These groups will gain knowledge, confidence, and opportunities to participate in community decision-making. Indirectly, the project is expected to improve the lives of over 100,000 community members as stronger civil society leadership leads to better services, more inclusive policies, and safer, more supportive communities.

Overall, the project seeks to build a Timor-Leste where every person—regardless of gender, ability, or identity—can participate fully and contribute to the country's development.

Expected results

The project aims to strengthen local civil society organizations (LCSOs) and empower marginalized groups—including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ individuals—so they can actively participate in decision-making and advocate for their rights.

Through organizational capacity development, leadership training, safeguarding systems, and mentorship, LCSOs will become stronger, more transparent, and better equipped to support their communities. By training them in gender equality, communication, advocacy, digital literacy, and civic engagement, the project ensures that LCSOs and the groups they support can confidently lead awareness campaigns, influence local authorities, and participate meaningfully in public consultations.

Community leaders and marginalized groups will gain practical skills in policy analysis, data collection, and community mobilization, enabling them to produce evidence, monitor government commitments, and hold duty-bearers accountable. Their involvement in town hall meetings, policy dialogues, and local influencing initiatives will help bring neglected issues into public conversations and encourage more inclusive governance.

Overall, the project will contribute to a stronger, more responsive civil society sector in Timor-Leste. It will expand civic participation, promote gender-transformative policies, reduce discrimination, and ensure that diverse voices are heard in national and local development. In the long term, this leads to better services, inclusive policies, and more equitable development for the country. influence and for inclusive and sustainable development in Timor-Leste.

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